



Veterans Representative
Receives Award of Appreciation

Iowa Workforce NEWS

March 2013 • Issue 28



Spencer Community Schools to serve as (NCRC) Proctoring Site

IowaWorks in conjunction with Spencer Community Schools is collaborating to promote and offer free National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) credentialing to Iowa residents and Spencer Community School students.

Interested individuals will be administered three computerized credential assessments which measure the world of work skills. This is part of a broader Skilled Iowa Initiative by Governor Terry Branstad.

The Skilled Iowa Initiative will improve the job training and marketability of Iowa's workforce and drive future economic growth for the state. Similar initiatives throughout the country have changed the landscape of local economies through programs that incorporate this nationally recognized work-ready assessment system developed by ACT®. It measures a workers' skills in the areas of applied mathematics, reading for information and locating information.

"The Skilled Iowa Initiative is a critical step in improving the quality of the workforce in

Iowa," said Governor Terry Branstad when the initiative was announced in June of 2012.

The program uses a universal testing system that rates the skills and abilities of those in Iowa's workforce, awarding a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), a portable certification for the potential job seeker, upon completion of the program.

The NCRC is an effective measure of foundational skills and will help businesses confidently hire workers who are right for the job. It will help businesses evaluate an individual worker's abilities, allowing for a more accurate matching of skill sets with those required by the job. There is no cost to Iowa businesses to use NCRC assessments as part of their hiring process. Additionally, there is no cost to potential job seekers (residents of Iowa) wishing to take the assessments.

More information about the NCRC can also be found online at www.SkilledIowa.org.



NCRC Testing Provided during State Tournaments

IowaWORKS Central Iowa recently offered Skilled Iowa National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) testing during the State High School Wrestling, Girls Basketball and Boys Basketball tournaments. One of the participants recently sent a letter to Director Teresa Wahlert to thank the staff that assisted with the testing.

Monica Post writes "Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Skilled Iowa program and take the NCRC test. I was ready and eager to participate because I knew how critical this may be in tipping the job scale in my favor. I especially wanted to let you know how helpful Denise Schippers and Nina Gotta have been. They went above and beyond to provide me with the opportunity."

Message from the Director

While unemployment in Iowa ranks fifth lowest in the country, the fact remains there are close to 80,000 Iowans and millions of Americans out of work. Now more than ever, it is important that Iowa takes the steps necessary to safeguard a secure employment future for the next generation.



Teresa Wahlert
IWD Director

Currently, 56 percent of Iowa's jobs are considered "middle-skill" jobs, or jobs that require more than a high school diploma, up to a 2-year degree. Unfortunately, only 33 percent of Iowa workers are qualified for those positions.

In response to the changing economic environment and a need for skilled workers to close the middle skill jobs gap, high schools across the nation and in Iowa are shining a spotlight on the skills students must secure to be successful in the workplace.

IWD strongly encourages high school students to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) through the Skilled Iowa Initiative.

High school schools across the state are encouraging their students to take the test to earn an NCRC, and we encourage other schools to join the statewide Skilled Iowa effort. Almost all public high schools across the state have computer technology provided by IWD that helps begin this process.

Having Iowa students and workers earn an NCRC helps that state guarantee it has the labor force in place to meet employer's needs now and into the future.

For more information about the Skilled Iowa Initiative visit www.skillediowa.org or call (515) 281-7538.



Southwest ECI held meeting on Skilled Iowa

The Southwest Iowa Employers' Council met on February 13, 2013 at the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce to hear Teresa Wahlert, Director of Iowa Workforce Development present information about the Skilled Iowa Initiative. Following her presentation, businesses were invited to the NCRC Testing Open House at the IWD office across the street from the Chamber. Both events were well received.



ECI's Hold Joint Meeting on Being Prepared for an OSHA Audit

The Lakes Area Employers' Council (ECI) and Kossuth County ECI held a meeting jointly on Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2013 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Iowa Lakes Community College.

Featured speaker was Anne Jackson with the Division of Labor, Iowa Workforce Development.

All employers, human resource personnel, accounting, payroll, and other staff members were invited to attend.

Anne shared the following information with the group:

1. How to be prepared for an OSHA audit.
2. How to support your progress concerning safety issues with good recording keeping.
3. How to avoid expensive fines and penalties.
4. Most importantly, – How to keep your work site safe with an ongoing, systematic approach to safety in the workplace.



Veterans Representative Receives Award of Appreciation

Veterans Representative

Alan Murphy recently received an award from the Family Alliance for Veterans of America (FAVA).

“Alan Murphy is an amazing individual who very much cares about our veterans,” says Rhonda Jordal, chairman of FAVA. “Murphy has been instrumental in helping FAVA as we launched our National Headquarters in Iowa. Murphy is someone we work closely with to connect veterans with

jobs. I also can count on Murphy to advise FAVA as we move forward on projects to help fulfill the needs of veterans.”

Murphy was also presented a FAVA coin, something not given out to very many individuals.

“[The coin] holds great meaning and is only given to individuals who we hold in high esteem for helping in the veteran realm — Alan fits that to a tee,” states Jordal.



IowaWORKS Services Offered to Offenders Before Release

Iowa Workforce Development works with offenders to find gainful employment after being released. Most state prisons have a workforce advisor whose primary goal is to address issues employers may have when hiring ex-offenders.

Part of that assistance is having offenders take the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) tests. These tests are required by many employers and trade union apprenticeships. Taking these tests prior to release provides an offender with another tool to demonstrate their competence in the work place. The NCRC tests measures skills in three areas: math, reading and

information gathering. If sufficient scores are obtained, an offender may receive either a platinum, gold, silver or bronze certificate.

Brenda Tart, workforce advisor at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women (ICIW) provided a recent update. She stated ten women offenders started Office Specialist Certification classes through DMACC. It was coordinated by Tart and ICIW Reentry Coordinator, Kathy Culbertson. Tuition and books were covered by one-time funding.

In addition, ICIW has partnered with Iowa College Student Aid to provide information on student loans, defaulted loans, PELL grants, filling out FAFSA

forms, and student loan deferrals for those women needing this assistance. Financial Peace University (a 13-week intense money management program) is now a core requirement for ICIW offenders, which means that FPU classes will be filled by case plan and counselor referral. Tart brought FPU into the institution.

A few recent ICIW success stories include:

- Alaine: Released September 2012 and completed all IWD core classes and worked as an IWD tutor within the prison. She is currently a manager at Village Inn and moved into her own apartment in December.
- Felicia: Released in

August 2009 and was successfully discharged from parole. She earned a bronze NCRC, completed an AA degree from DMACC and a BA degree from Grand View University. Currently works as a financial planner/trainer for Iowa Social Economic Development Ventures.

- Stacy: Released in January 2011 and is currently working as a home health care aide. Earned a silver NCRC and completed all IWD core classes.
- Stephanie: Released in July 2009. and earned a silver NCRC. She will be completing a biology degree in March 2013 and is employed by LifeServe Blood Center in Sioux City.

Noteworthy Employee Acknowledgements and Accomplishments

We appreciate the feedback we get from our customers. Here are a few noteworthy comments we've received:

– Nicole Passehl sent in a note to thank **Simona Hammond**, Des Moines, who works in the Unemployment Insurance Service Center. Passehl said she had never been on Unemployment Insurance before and has managed to mess it up.

"[Simona] got everything figured out for me and was just fantastic!" I would be lost without her help. She is a great asset to Iowa Workforce Development."

– Kathleen Hogan wrote an e-mail to commend **Trudi Snyder**, Des Moines. Hogan had questions regarding the power of attorney form and accessing the online system. "Trudi was very helpful, patient and took

the time to walk me through the online system. I appreciate all the time she spent with me."

– Todd Mummert sent in a note to thank the IowaWORKS Greater Siouxland team in Sioux City. He states **Mike Henrich**, **Tonia Abell** and **Jon Murad** were especially helpful. "I don't believe I could have ever gotten my 'forever job/career' without their expert assistance. These people have changed my life, were my pleasure to meet and are jewels in the state of Iowa's crown."

– Kerby Miller sent an e-mail thanking **Heather Semke** & **Lindy Peterson** of the IowaWORKS Southern Hills office in Creston. "Without the help of Semke & Peterson, I do not think I would ever had this great opportunity to pursue my passion in life. I cannot thank them enough and I will be forever grateful for their help."

If you would like to send us your noteworthy comment, send it to: kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov or 515-281-5407.



Employee News

Retirements

Carol Paulus
Rita Carroll

Transfers/Recalls

Amber Connolly
Bill Austin
Paricia Henrich

New Hires

Paul Eriksen
Danielle Van Kooten
Kristina Jones
Ravi Rayasam
Timothy Snyder

Anniversaries

5 Years
Ryan Headrick
Lisa Pundt
James Riepe
Douglas Marshall
Kathy Rice
Katherine Pine
Zelda Kallem
Robert Parker

10 Years
Mary Conrath
Nancie Petty
Linda Terry
15 Years
Brenda Noe
Lonnie Majerus
Elsie Lewis
Kelly Roach
Shelley Frasher

Karen Holett
Christine Nilles
Michael Henrich
Daniel Brown
25 Years
Myra Baughman
Patricia Daly
30+ Years
Kathy Jergenson
Etha Carson
Ann Wagner

Iowa Workforce NEWS

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For Deaf or Hard of Hearing, call Relay 711

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